

# 11 Population census statistics, 1996

## Trends

The ABS five-yearly census of population and housing provides excellent data on long term employment trends and on the labour force characteristics of persons with a highest qualification in nursing, not all of whom may be registered or enrolled.

Total health industry employment increased by 18.9% between 1986 and 1996, but nurse employment in this industry increased by just 2.2%. A 47.3% fall in nurse employment in psychiatric hospitals and a 4.7% fall in employment in nursing homes were offset by a 36.3% increase in employment in medical practices and an 80.6% increase in employment at community health centres.

Significant changes also occurred among nurse occupations between 1986 and 1996:

- There was a 46.5% decline in the number of directors of nursing and a 1.6% reduction in the number of nurse managers. Enrolled nurse numbers fell by 37.8%.
- Midwife numbers increased by 39.0%, and the number of registered mental health nurses rose by 11.3% and of developmental disability nurses by 55.1%.
- In the support occupations, the number of nursing assistants increased by 27.1% from 20,402 to 25,941, while 'personal care assistant' emerged as a newly classified occupation with 16,706 persons.

## Labour force participation

The census provides data on labour force participation by persons with a highest qualification in nursing. There were 329,666 persons with a highest qualification in nursing in Australia in 1996, and 186,144 persons employed in nursing, including dental nursing.

There were some differences in labour force participation between Australian-born nurses with a highest qualification in nursing and overseas-born nurses who obtained their qualification in Australia. Australian-born nurses appear to retire earlier than overseas-born nurses. In the 55–64 year age group, 50.2% of Australian-born nurses were not in the labour force, compared with 24.7% of overseas-born nurses in that age group. In the 65 and over age group, only 7.0% of Australian-born nurses were still working, compared with 35.3% of overseas-born nurses, although the numbers of the latter were small.

In the age group under 25 years, the reverse pattern applies, with 15.8% of overseas-born nurses not in the labour force, compared with 7.3% of Australian born nurses.

In terms of leakage from the nursing workforce to other occupations, the census data appears to indicate that this does not occur substantially until the 35–44 year age group. In this group, 6,700 Australian qualified nurses were found to be working in non-nursing occupations, although some of these would be working as administrators, researchers and academics in nursing.

A further analysis of leakage from the nursing workforce can be seen in Table 72, using data from the 1996 national nursing labour force survey. This tabulates the labour force status by age group of nurses who were registered or enrolled in 1996 but not employed in nursing:

- of the 3,503 nurses overseas, one-third were under 30 years of age and a further 40% were in their 30s,
- among nurse graduates under 25 years of age, 251 were employed in non-nursing jobs. The numbers employed in non-nursing jobs increased to 788 for 25–29 year olds, 1,314 for 30–34 year olds and peaked at 1,932 for the 35–39 year age group. Overall, there were 9,094 registered and enrolled nurses employed in jobs outside nursing, with 2,161 of these looking for work in nursing at the time of the survey.

**Table 69: Health industry and nurse employment, Australia, 1986 and 1996**

<b>Work setting</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>Total employment</b>			
Acute care hospitals	231,570	222,423	-3.9
Psychiatric hospitals	18,730	8,420	-55.0
Nursing homes	67,570	80,560	19.2
Medical practices	64,960	78,140	20.3
Community health centres	13,650	31,930	133.9
<b>Total health industry</b>	<b>451,870</b>	<b>537,210</b>	<b>18.9</b>
<b>Nurse employment</b>			
Acute care hospitals	104,070	104,438	0.4
Psychiatric hospitals	7,880	4,150	-47.3
Nursing homes	29,810	28,412	-4.7
Medical practices	6,710	9,143	36.3
Community health centres	4,850	8,758	80.6
<b>Total health industry</b>	<b>157,030</b>	<b>160,416</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Other industries</b>	<b>16,410</b>	<b>19,574</b>	<b>19.3</b>

Source: AIHW from ABS data.

**Table 70: Employment in nursing occupations, Australia, 1991 and 1996**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>% change</b>
Director of nursing	5,850	3,132	-46.5
Nurse manager	6,281	6,179	-1.6
Nurse educator	1,706	1,776	4.1
Nurse researcher	..	289	..
Registered nurse	118,792	133,931	12.7
Reg. midwife	7,843	10,901	39.0
Reg. mental health nurse	5,427	6,039	11.3
Reg. dev. disability nurse	702	1,089	55.1
<i>Total registered</i>	<i>146,601</i>	<i>163,336</i>	<i>11.4</i>
Enrolled nurse	39,485	24,559	-37.8
<i>Total registered &amp; enrolled</i>	<i>186,086</i>	<i>187,895</i>	<i>1.0</i>
Nursing assistant	20,402	25,941	27.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>206,488</b>	<b>213,836</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Personal care assistant	..	16,706	..

*Note:* Personal care assistant became a newly recognised occupation in the second edition of the *Australian Standard Classification of Occupations*, used for the 1996 census.

*Source:* AIHW from ABS data.

**Table 71: Persons with a highest qualification in nursing and employed nurses, States and Territories, 1996**

	NSW	Vic	Qld	WA	SA	Tas	ACT	NT	Aust
<b>Males</b>									
Basic nursing	5,897	3,589	2,872	1,208	1,623	517	192	173	16,071
Community nursing	6	8	3	0	7	0	3	0	27
Midwifery	78	41	53	23	22	7	4	7	235
Mothercraft nursing	7	14	6	5	0	3	0	0	35
Nursing education	35	34	13	6	10	3	0	0	101
Psychiatric nursing	559	863	392	364	233	83	14	20	2,528
Nursing, nec	208	418	91	42	102	35	7	6	909
Nursing, nfd	149	86	76	16	49	12	6	6	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,939</b>	<b>5,053</b>	<b>3,506</b>	<b>1,664</b>	<b>2,046</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>20,306</b>
<b>Females</b>									
Basic nursing	81,237	62,255	45,717	25,470	23,816	6,909	4,144	2,426	251,974
Community nursing	274	309	120	65	106	13	21	7	915
Midwifery	8,947	7,550	6,154	3,013	2,777	849	528	403	30,221
Mothercraft nursing	1,607	3,203	834	799	423	443	87	53	7,449
Nursing education	352	396	147	71	91	27	15	10	1,109
Psychiatric nursing	924	1,301	517	565	412	89	47	44	3,899
Nursing, nec	1,926	1,919	701	387	592	164	76	48	5,813
Nursing, nfd	2,835	1,607	2,015	569	522	234	123	75	7,980
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,102</b>	<b>78,540</b>	<b>56,205</b>	<b>30,939</b>	<b>28,739</b>	<b>8,728</b>	<b>5,041</b>	<b>3,066</b>	<b>309,360</b>
<b>Persons</b>									
Basic nursing	87,134	65,844	48,589	26,678	25,439	7,426	4,336	2,599	268,045
Community nursing	280	317	123	65	113	13	24	7	942
Midwifery	9,025	7,591	6,207	3,036	2,799	856	532	410	30,456
Mothercraft nursing	1,614	3,217	840	804	423	446	87	53	7,484
Nursing education	387	430	160	77	101	30	15	10	1,210
Psychiatric nursing	1,483	2,164	909	929	645	172	61	64	6,427
Nursing, nec	2,134	2,337	792	429	694	199	83	54	6,722
Nursing, nfd	2,984	1,693	2,091	585	571	246	129	81	8,380
<b>Total</b>	<b>105,041</b>	<b>83,593</b>	<b>59,711</b>	<b>32,603</b>	<b>30,785</b>	<b>9,388</b>	<b>5,267</b>	<b>3,278</b>	<b>329,666</b>
<b>Persons per 100,000 population</b>									
Basic nursing	1,404.5	1,443.7	1,455.2	1,510.9	1,725.4	1,564.7	1,407.8	1,428.8	1,464.0
Community nursing	4.5	7.0	3.7	3.7	7.7	2.7	7.8	3.8	5.1
Midwifery	145.5	166.4	185.9	171.9	189.8	180.4	172.7	225.4	166.3
Mothercraft nursing	26.0	70.5	25.2	45.5	28.7	94.0	28.2	29.1	40.9
Nursing education	6.2	9.4	4.8	4.4	6.9	6.3	4.9	5.5	6.6
Psychiatric nursing	23.9	47.4	27.2	52.6	43.7	36.2	19.8	35.2	35.1
Nursing, nec	34.4	51.2	23.7	24.3	47.1	41.9	26.9	29.7	36.7
Nursing, nfd	48.1	37.1	62.6	33.1	38.7	51.8	41.9	44.5	45.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,693.1</b>	<b>1,832.9</b>	<b>1,788.2</b>	<b>1,846.5</b>	<b>2,088.0</b>	<b>1,978.1</b>	<b>1,710.1</b>	<b>1,802.1</b>	<b>1,800.5</b>
<b>Persons employed as nurses</b>									
Males	5,277	3,695	2,779	1,263	1,541	488	173	187	15,403
Females	54,689	44,761	30,547	15,596	15,717	4,843	2,533	1,735	170,741
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,966</b>	<b>48,456</b>	<b>33,326</b>	<b>16,859</b>	<b>17,258</b>	<b>5,331</b>	<b>2,706</b>	<b>1,922</b>	<b>186,144</b>
<b>Persons employed as a percentage of persons with a highest qualification</b>									
Males	76.0	73.1	79.3	75.9	75.3	73.9	76.5	88.2	75.9
Females	55.7	57.0	54.3	50.4	55.8	55.5	50.2	56.6	55.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>56.8</b>	<b>51.4</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>56.5</b>

Notes: nec—not elsewhere classified; nfd—not further defined; dental nurses included in total employed.

Source: ABS Cat. Nos. 2022.0 and 3101.0

**Table 72: Australian-born persons with a highest qualification in nursing, by age, Australia, 1996**

Employment status	Age group						Total
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
	<b>(number)</b>						
Employed	12,545	44,525	62,995	38,021	12,851	1,881	172,818
Unemployed	374	1,036	1,521	807	288	36	4,062
Not in the labour force	1,012	8,958	12,130	7,891	13,340	25,027	68,358
Not stated	22	111	207	140	94	0	574
Total	13,953	54,630	76,853	46,859	26,573	26,944	245,812
Persons employed in nursing occupations	13,450	43,937	56,241	32,158	9,397	723	155,906
	<b>(per cent)</b>						
Employed	89.9	81.5	82.0	81.1	48.4	7.0	70.3
Unemployed	2.7	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.1	0.1	1.7
Not in the labour force	7.3	16.4	15.8	16.8	50.2	92.9	27.8
Not stated	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	<b>(per cent of total qualified)</b>						
Persons employed in nursing occupations	96.4	80.4	73.2	68.6	35.4	2.7	63.4
	<b>(per cent of employment status category)</b>						
Employed	7.3	25.8	36.5	22.0	7.4	1.1	100.0
Unemployed	9.2	25.5	37.4	19.9	7.1	0.9	100.0
Not in the labour force	1.5	13.1	17.7	11.5	19.5	36.6	100.0
Not stated	3.8	19.3	36.1	24.4	16.4	0.0	100.0
Total	5.7	22.2	31.3	19.1	10.8	11.0	100.0
Persons employed in nursing occupations	8.6	28.2	36.1	20.6	6.0	0.5	100.0

Source: AIHW from ABS data.

**Table 73: Overseas-born persons with a highest qualification in nursing obtained in Australia, by age, Australia, 1996**

Employment status	Age group						Total
	15-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
	(number)						
Employed	649	2,793	2,321	557	61	6	6,387
Unemployed	45	86	68	16	0	0	215
Not in the labour force	131	554	356	40	20	11	1,112
Not stated	6	3	3	3	0	0	15
Total	831	3,436	2,748	616	81	17	7,729
Persons employed in nursing occupations	588	2,839	2,669	698	74	3	6,871
	(per cent)						
Employed	78.1	81.3	84.5	90.4	75.3	35.3	82.6
Unemployed	5.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	0.0	0.0	2.8
Not in the labour force	15.8	16.1	13.0	6.5	24.7	64.7	14.4
Not stated	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(per cent of total qualified)						
Persons employed in nursing occupations	70.8	82.6	97.1	113.3	91.4	17.6	88.9
	(per cent of employment status category)						
Employed	10.2	43.7	36.3	8.7	1.0	0.1	100.0
Unemployed	20.9	40.0	31.6	7.4	0.0	0.0	100.0
Not in the labour force	11.8	49.8	32.0	3.6	1.8	1.0	100.0
Not stated	40.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Total	10.8	44.5	35.6	8.0	1.0	0.2	100.0
Persons employed in nursing occupations	8.6	41.3	38.8	10.2	1.1	0.0	100.0

Source: AIHW from ABS data.

**Table 74: Registered and enrolled nurses who are not employed in nursing, by age, Australia, 1996**

Employment status	Age group										Total	
	15-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 and over		
	(number)											
Looking for work in nursing:												
Employed elsewhere	76	204	306	447	426	325	199	117	44	18	2,161	
Not employed	173	315	510	747	630	392	319	244	136	57	3,523	
Overseas	314	879	784	602	399	266	153	67	31	9	3,503	
Not looking for work in nursing:												
Employed elsewhere	175	584	1,008	1,485	1,369	1,031	701	387	140	54	6,933	
Not employed	144	764	1,668	2,133	1,195	738	719	845	730	627	9,563	
Total	882	2,746	4,277	5,414	4,018	2,751	2,092	1,661	1,080	764	25,683	
	(per cent)											
Looking for work in nursing:												
Employed elsewhere	8.7	7.4	7.1	8.2	10.6	11.8	9.5	7.0	4.1	2.4	8.4	
Not employed	19.6	11.5	11.9	13.8	15.7	14.2	15.3	14.7	12.6	7.4	13.7	
Overseas	35.6	32.0	18.3	11.1	9.9	9.7	7.3	4.1	2.9	1.1	13.6	
Not looking for work in nursing:												
Employed elsewhere	19.9	21.3	23.6	27.4	34.1	37.5	33.5	23.3	12.9	7.0	27.0	
Not employed	16.3	27.8	39.0	39.4	29.7	26.8	34.4	50.9	67.6	82.1	37.2	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
	(per cent of employment status category)											
Looking for work in nursing:												
Employed elsewhere	3.5	9.4	14.1	20.7	19.7	15.0	9.2	5.4	2.0	0.8	100.0	
Not employed	4.9	8.9	14.5	21.2	17.9	11.1	9.1	6.9	3.9	1.6	100.0	
Overseas	9.0	25.1	22.4	17.2	11.4	7.6	4.4	1.9	0.9	0.2	100.0	
Not looking for work in nursing:												
Employed elsewhere	2.5	8.4	14.5	21.4	19.7	14.9	10.1	5.6	2.0	0.8	100.0	
Not employed	1.5	8.0	17.4	22.3	12.5	7.7	7.5	8.8	7.6	6.6	100.0	
Total	3.4	10.7	16.7	21.1	15.6	10.7	8.1	6.5	4.2	3.0	100.0	

Source: AIHW.